

Game Changers: Melinda Witmer

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COURTESY OF TIME WARNER CABLE
Witmer took up hoops to play with her kids and discovered she has a knack for shooting free throws.

Melinda Witmer

Time Warner Cable
EVP, Chief Video and Content Officer

No company has made bigger inroads in the sports media business in the past eight months than Time Warner Cable.

Under the direction of the company’s chief video and content officer, Melinda Witmer, Time Warner Cable snatched the rights to the Los Angeles Lakers from Fox Sports Net and was instrumental in helping the Pac-12 Conference come up with a plan to launch six regional channels next August. Witmer set up a new division, called TWC Sports, to handle the company’s relationships in the sports community and staffed it with three industry veterans: David Rone, Mark Shuken and Dan Finnerty.

As the top programming executive at the country’s second biggest cable operator, Witmer also has been at the forefront of cutting carriage deals with sports networks like ESPN and Fox Sports that contemplate TV Everywhere.

— John Ourand

- **First job:** Tennis instructor.
- **What is the best advice you've ever received:** Fred Dressler told me to trust my instincts and “just make it up.” “Trust me,” he said, “the other guy is just making it up, too.”
- **What keeps you awake at night?:** The endless opportunities presented in our business today. There is a great atmosphere of intense competition and entrepreneurialism in the business today that just lights me up.
- **Person who had the biggest influence on your career in sports:** Family. I come from a family of rabid sports fans, married another, and gave birth to two more. They really do help me understand our customers who are sports fans, what moves them, and what really matters about sports.
- **One attribute I look for when hiring is ...:** Creativity and judgment, but they have to be someone I would want to be in the trenches with.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

“Melinda is an incredibly tough negotiator and a deft problem solver who is constantly looking for creative win-win scenarios in any negotiation. In addition to being very good at what she does, she’s a great person — which is an added benefit considering the amount of time it takes to get deals done in our business.”

- **David Preschlack,** ESPN executive vice president, affiliate sales and marketing